

DCB WEB PAGE TEAM

Working Paper #6

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RESOURCE NEEDS

This section summarizes the areas in which resources will be required to implement the Web Team recommendations. The types of resources that are needed include funds and human resources many of which are not available within DCB. (The order of the items is purely random and corresponds to the order in which I thought of them.)

Server Hardware/Software

Dedicated server hardware is recommended for several reasons.

- Potential security holes in web servers (via cgi scripts and Java) require that sensitive information not be located on the server machine.
- Reliability and accessibility of the web site would be enhanced if it were a stand alone system.
- The network performance of the DCB Unix cluster would not be affected by high web site traffic.

Commercial server software is recommended for several reasons.

- It is more likely that commercial software will be supported, maintained (bugs fixed) and upgraded.
- It is more likely that auxiliary tools will be included with or available for a commercial server. These might include server scripts, database hooks, usage analysis tools, and site maintenance tools.
- Technical support will be readily available.

Site maintenance software such as Adobe SiteMill is also recommended to simplify the upkeep of the DCB Web Site. This software is relatively inexpensive and

can greatly simplify the site maintenance problem. It is likely that only the webmaster and/or administrator will need this program.

Graphic Designer

The design of graphical aspects of the site should be done to make it attractive and efficient. Things like logos, icons, aesthetic images, backgrounds, typeface, and color selection really require the eye of a graphic designer. A designer can take ideas and suggestions and translate them into an effective design.

The role of the graphic designer would primarily be to support the basic visual aspects of the site and would be required to arrive at the initial site design and occasionally thereafter to tweak the design and introduce new graphic elements to keep the site fresh.

Script Author(s)

The development of scripts to add various interactivity features to the site will require skills not currently available within DCB. The current desired features list puts most of the interactivity in the "nice to have" category and will not require many scripts to be written immediately. However, the functionality of scripts is seen as a key capability that is needed to achieve the objectives of the DCB Web Site.

HTML Editing Software

The plan depends on all branch staff developing content for the web site. In order to make this process as efficient as possible and limit the barriers to content development several strategies have been developed. One is to develop templates that can be readily modified. Another is to utilize PDF files that require no special skills to produce. And the third is to use software to limit the degree to which anyone needs to understand HTML to produce site content.

Two of these strategies require the purchase of software. In order to produce PDF files one needs a PDF writer. This software is relatively inexpensive but should be licensed in a manner in which it is effortless to use. This means having the software on everyone's desktop computer.

HTML editors (e.g., Claris HomePage, Adobe PageMill) are also available which make the development of web pages relatively easy. These packages are also relatively inexpensive. However, it is probably feasible to install this software on a server that can be accessed over the network. It is unlikely that more than a couple people will use this software at any given time.

Reference Books

A good collection of basic references on the world wide web, html, scripting, java, etc. should be readily available to the staff. It might also be beneficial to have a subscription to one of the many internet/web related magazines. These would provide the staff with the information needed to exploit the capabilities of the web.

Web Administration

There are several functions that need to be performed on a nearly continuous basis and others that need to be done occasionally. These are described in Working Paper #2. Two major functions are administration and webmaster. The time and training required to support these functions should be budgeted explicitly (both in branch planning and in performance plans of the associated individuals).

BUDGET

Currently there has been no budget indentified. It is important to have an estimate of the resources (both human and monetary) available to update and maintain the Web Site. This information will be needed very soon.